

Possible **Signs** of a **Gambling Problem**

- ▶ Gambling more often for more money,
- ▶ Gambling for longer periods of time,
- ▶ Gambling in spite of negative consequences, such as large losses, or family problems, and
- ▶ Gambling as a means to cope with loneliness, anxiety or depression, and
- ▶ Committing illegal acts or lying in order to sustain the addiction.

Help?

There is help available for problem/ compulsive gamblers. If you think you or someone else has a gambling problem, call the National Problem Gambling Helpline for free, confidential information.

**24 Hour
Toll Free
Assistance
1-800-522-4700**

“It is interesting to note that many recovering alcoholics are not aware that they might be at risk of crossing over to a gambling addiction.”

—A Chemical Dependency and Gambling Counselor



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Gambling Among Those in Recovery Recreation with Risk?

“We have been retired two years and I found out my husband has gambled away all of our retirement savings.”

—A 68-year-old
Helpline caller

Gambling in the United States has changed significantly over the past several years. It is more accessible than ever before and widely marketed.

Recreation?

For about two-thirds of people in recovery, gambling is a social or recreational activity. It is fun and entertaining. It does not cause problems.

For those who choose to gamble recreationally, the following information is essential to help insure that their gambling does not lead to problems:

1. Recreational gambling is most often combined with other activities and done socially with family, friends, or colleagues. Always gamble with others and not alone.
2. Recreational gambling is done for limited amounts of time. Set limits on how often and for how long you gamble.

“I didn’t think I could get addicted to gambling. I’m an alcoholic and thought I would recognize the signs.”

—A 38-year-old
Helpline caller

3. Recreational gambling always has predetermined limits for losses that are acceptable. Remember money spent on gambling needs to be considered entertainment.
4. Over time nearly everyone who gambles loses. The benefit of gambling is almost always recreational and rarely a financial gain.

People who are aware of this information and follow the suggestions above can significantly reduce their risk of developing a gambling problem.

Risks?

For about one-third of people in recovery, gambling losses can significantly affect their lives.

Problem gambling is **similar** to other addictions in that:

- ▶ it is a preoccupation with obtaining money;
- ▶ withdrawal, restlessness or irritability are characteristics of someone attempting to stop;

- ▶ there are repeated efforts to cut down or stop; and
- ▶ gambling continues despite social, legal or occupational consequences.

“I’m a recovering alcoholic. I thought I could keep my gambling from getting out of control. I was wrong.”

—A 57-year-old
Helpline caller

Problem gambling is **different** from other addictions in that:

- ▶ it is much more difficult to detect than alcoholism or drug use;
- ▶ the addiction’s progression moves very quickly (often less than one year);
- ▶ gamblers tend to feel significantly more shame, guilt or depression.

Problem drinkers are often in a position to become problem gamblers.



Over 35 percent of problem gamblers have a history of chemical dependency. That's why it's critical for those in recovery to be aware of the risks of gambling. Call for confidential information.

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